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**SEVENTH QUARTERLY REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL TO THE PERMANENT  
COUNCIL ON THE MISSION TO SUPPORT THE PEACE PROCESS IN COLOMBIA  
(MAPP/OEA)**

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and will be presented to the Permanent Council of the Organization.**

SEVENTH QUARTERLY REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL TO THE PERMANENT  
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I. BACKGROUND

This quarterly report of the Secretary General on the Mission to Support the Peace Process in Colombia (MAPP/OEA) is submitted to the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS) in compliance with resolution CP/RES. 859 (1397/04), in which the Council resolved "[t]o instruct the Secretary General to provide quarterly reports to the Permanent Council on the work of the MAPP/OEA and its continued ability to contribute, through its work in Colombia, to the fulfillment of the values and principles contained in the Charter of the Organization of American States and the Inter-American Democratic Charter."

II. INTRODUCTION

MAPP/OEA

Since the sixth report was submitted to the Permanent Council, the MAPP/OEA and the peace process itself have both made significant progress. It must be recalled, however, that this progress has been achieved in a context of great complexity, inherent in any peace process and particularly in the one under way in Colombia, which has been marked by conflict for more than 50 years. The Secretary General's quarterly reports to the Permanent Council on the MAPP/OEA give a snapshot of what could be the foundations of a broader structure of peace.

In this respect, mention must be made of the Secretary General's visit to Colombia between July 11 and 15 of this year. During that visit, the Secretary General held meetings with various government authorities, including President Álvaro Uribe Vélez, to share views on the peace process in the country. Likewise, the Secretary General met with the leaders of the MAPP/OEA and with the coordinators of its regional offices, and received firsthand information on the status of their work.

At the invitation of the mayor of Medellín, the Secretary General was able to observe the social reintegration projects under way in that major city.

With specific reference to the Mission, the member states and observer countries gave a highly positive response to the Secretary General's appeal to expand their support for the Mission. That appeal was for the countries interested in assisting the Mission to provide financial, material, and human resources. Of particular importance was the establishment of the "Friends of the OAS Peace Mission in Colombia," a group of countries that includes Canada, Chile, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the United States.

The Government of the Netherlands deserves special recognition as the MAPP/OEA's main contributor since the Organization started work in Colombia.

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The Swedish Government renewed its commitment to the Mission, with generous funding and the fielding of a Demobilization, Disarmament, and Reintegration (DDR) expert and of a specialist in working with nongovernmental organizations. The Government of Sweden also reported that it is prepared to earmark an annual sum in support of the Mission.

The Government of Canada has become an active partner in financing the Mission since 2005, and it is hoped that this valuable support will continue.

Along the same lines, the Secretary General notes that The Bahamas made a second contribution to the Mission, in July 2006.

The Secretary General is also grateful to Ireland for its decision to support the Mission through its 2005 contribution, and its offer to renew this effort for 2006.

In June 2006, the Government of Thailand generously made a financial contribution to the Mission.

The donation of vehicles and computer equipment last year by the Republic of Korea constituted a substantial contribution to the work of the Mission.

The Secretary General also wishes to thank the Governments of Mexico and Brazil for their valuable support in financing the participation of experts in various fields, including human rights, social affairs, diplomatic relations, and public safety. In this respect, the Government of Guatemala has informed the General Secretariat that it has appointed a Guatemalan professional to be a member of the Mission. The Governments of Argentina, Chile, and Peru have contacted the Mission to explore the possibilities of contributing to it by financing experts.

The United States has announced a major contribution to funding of the Mission for this year.

The Government of Spain, through its Council of Ministers, approved a significant contribution to the Mission. In addition, the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI) has decided to make another major contribution to the Mission.

The Government of Norway informed the General Secretariat of its desire to make a generous financial contribution to the Mission, arrangements for which are now being worked out.

The municipal government of Medellín has provided funding under an agreement signed with the Mission to incorporate a team of six social workers to strengthen the Mission's activities in the city's neighborhoods. The regional office in Medellín now has a solid team more proportionate to the challenges in that region of the country.

All of this support has enabled the Mission to increase its presence, with its 34 international verifiers, 17 local professionals, and 34 individuals providing temporary assistance—for a total of 85 participants, 38 percent of whom are women.

Following a commitment given by the Secretary General, the Mission has adopted the Basic Manual for the performance of its functions. This manual contains clear and precise instructions for

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the Mission's verification experts to use in relation to (i) the cessation of hostilities, (ii) concentration, disarmament, and demobilization, (iii) dismantling of illegal armed units, (iv) maintenance of public order in demobilization areas, (v) reintegration, (vi) observance of Law 975/2005 (the Justice and Peace Law), and (vii) the field work methodology for use with communities affected by violence. The Secretary General has coordinated the advisory services offered to the Mission by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR).

Also noteworthy is the fact that, as part of its mandate, the Mission has taken a crosscutting approach in matters relating to gender, children's rights, and the rights of indigenous peoples and communities of African descent, both for the displaced population and for the communities receiving former combatants.

### THE PEACE PROCESS

In the period covered by this report, progress was made in negotiations with the National Liberation Army (ELN). Specifically, in February and April, representatives of the national government and of this guerrilla organization met in Havana, Cuba, in the second and third rounds of the Formal Exploratory Phase. The Governments of Cuba, Norway, Spain, and Switzerland participated in those meetings, as did various sectors of Colombian society.

In accordance with one of the agreements from the second round, on March 7 the national government recognized two leaders of this illegal armed group as representative members for a period of three months. The parties agreed that, following the third round, they would address the design of the process and preparation of the agenda, in order to seek common ground for moving forward in the search for peace.

On May 31, the national government renewed the representative member status of the ELN delegates, so that the Formal Exploratory Phase could continue.

The Colombian Government also cited the possibility of creating a zone for discussion with the FARC, as part of a cease-fire by that group. By means of a communiqué, that guerrilla group called upon Colombians to vote in favor of a proposal for dialogue and peace in the presidential elections held on May 28.

Since the launching of peace negotiations with the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) in November 2003, there have been 37 mass demobilization ceremonies in the course of which 30,915 members of this irregular armed group have begun the transition to civilian life. The month of April saw the dismantling of units that had remained outside the Santa Fe agreement, including the Héroes del Guaviare and the Los Llanos fronts and the Élder Cárdenas Bloc (BEC). It now remains to demobilize a last holdout unit of the BEC and the Cacique Pipintá Bloc. The last holdout unit of the BEC should be demobilized by the end of August 2006. It must also be noted that, while there has been contact with the Campesinas del Casanare Self-Defense Forces, no agreement has yet been reached on their demobilization.

In this context, the Mission identified a number of violations of the demobilization commitments, and failure to dismantle illegal armed units. The Mission also found shortcomings and gaps in the reintegration of former combatants. These considerations and observations derive from

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the Mission's mandate, and it is hoped that they will be taken into consideration by the Colombian Government.

The Mission has noted with concern the appearance of new groups in the area where the demobilized units were operating. They are being led by middle-ranking officers (demobilized or not), who in some cases are recruiting former paramilitary combatants. These units, as noted in the Sixth Report, are expanding and taking control of illegal economic activities.

On the other hand, the conclusions from a detailed analysis of the reintegration process show gaps in the coverage of the official offer. These gaps are particularly apparent in the fields of health, psychosocial support, and education, and many former combatants have no possibility of finding work or pursuing productive projects. It is clear that the pace of demobilization has exceeded the response capacity of the Program for Return to Civilian Life (*Programa de Reincorporación a la Vida Civil*, PRVC), which was not prepared to deal with such numbers of people. On this basis, the Mission can say that, despite the positive efforts made in the last few months, the PRVC remains in critical condition, and this poses a risk to the long-term viability of the peace process.

The General Secretariat reiterates that the success and sustainability of the peace process will depend on:

1. The attention paid to communities affected by violence;
2. Official recovery of the territories over which illegal groups have held sway; and
3. Effective reintegration of demobilized combatants.

### III. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND AUC DEMOBILIZATIONS

In the period from February to May 2006, there were six mass demobilizations, involving overall 8,625 members of the AUC. During this time, demobilization of the Próceres del Caguán Front, the Héroes de los Andagües and Héroes de Florencia in the Department of Caquetá, and the Putumayo Southern Front in the Department of Putumayo completed the dismantling of the armed units of the Bolívar Central Bloc, except for the Cacique Pipintá Bloc. A three-stage demobilization has been agreed to for the Elmer Cárdenas Bloc in Urabá Antioqueño and Chocoano; to date, two phases have been completed, and demobilization of another unit in the Department of Chocó is pending.

To sum up, in the course of the peace process with the AUC, from its beginning in 2003 until the month of May 2006, 36 armed units have been demobilized. The last year has been the most intense period of demobilizations, accounting for 52.89 percent of the total, representing 16,352 combatants over a period of four months (see Annex A).

Of the 30,915 former AUC members demobilized, 94 percent (29,036) are men and 6 percent (1,879) are women.

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The men-to-weapons ratio in the demobilized units is one weapon for every two combatants. Nevertheless, there are some groups that fall below this average: the Northern Bloc (Chimila), where the ratio is 0.28; the Northern Bloc (La Mesa) with 0.32; the Tolima Bloc with 0.24; and the Ortega Self-Defense Forces with 0.27.

When it comes to the type of weapon, 76 percent of the weapons turned in were long weapons, 17 percent were side arms, and 7 percent were support weapons, distributed in the following manner:

LONG WEAPONS	
RIFLES	12,412
SHOTGUNS	706
CARBINES	166
TOTAL	13,284
SIDE ARMS	
SUBMACHINE GUNS	245
PISTOLS	1,519
REVOLVERS	1,256
TOTAL	3,020
SUPPORT WEAPONS	
MACHINE GUNS	216
GRENADE LAUNCHERS m203	6
SINGLE-SHOT GRENADE LAUNCHERS	458
MULTIPLE GRENADE LAUNCHERS (MGL)	89
MORTAR TUBES	423
ROCKET LAUNCHERS	44
TOTAL	1,236

On the basis of this balance sheet, the destruction of weapons, which has yet to begin, remains of prime concern on the Mission's verification agenda, considering the progress made with disarmament, the quantity of weapons surrendered by the demobilized AUC, and the time they have remained in government hands.

With respect to the main areas of demobilization<sup>1/</sup>, 60 percent of demobilized persons are to be found in four departments: Antioquia (29%), Córdoba (14%), Cesar (9%), and Magdalena (8%). As to the municipalities with the greatest concentration, first come the capital cities: Medellín (3,037), Montería (1,859), Valledupar (1,548), and Santa Marta (1,228). Prominent on the list as well are towns such as Tierralta (Córdoba) with 940 demobilized persons, Caucasia (Antioquia) with 728, Turbo (Antioquia) with 646, Puerto Boyacá (Boyacá) with 600, Valencia (Córdoba) with 505, San Pedro de Urabá (Antioquia) with 467, Carepa (Antioquia) with 412, and Apartadó (Antioquia) with 439. The demobilized and returning population is heavily concentrated, then, in the following

1. Contact departments and municipalities, to April 26, 2006.

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regions: Occidente de Córdoba, Urabá Antioqueño, Bajo Cauca, and Magdalena Medio. In fact, 50 municipalities account for 70% of the demobilized population (See map).

#### IV. VERIFICATION OF THE DISMANTLING OF AUC UNITS

Generally speaking, the blocs and fronts that had been operating in the country's various regions have been broken up, and most of the former combatants are now in the process of reintegration into civilian life and are returning to their home regions.

The Sixth Report of the Secretary General to the Permanent Council on the MAPP/OEA identified a series of worrisome phenomena arising subsequent to the demobilizations, including the regrouping of demobilized combatants into criminal gangs that control specific communities and illegal economic activities; holdouts who have not demobilized; and the emergence of new armed groups and/or the strengthening of those that already existed in areas abandoned by demobilized groups.

The Mission has continued to monitor these dynamics, focusing on certain critical areas in which it has attempted to verify that the demobilized units have been effectively dismantled.

In specific zones, there appear to be emerging situations of possible rearmament and the appearance of armed groups claiming to be the "new generation of paramilitaries."

These new armed units are appearing in various guises: as verified by the Mission and stated by the local authorities and certain civilians, these situations represent an amalgamation of various forces and interests from different illegal sectors. There is no one interpretation that will cover them all.

The Mission has confirmed, in a series of verification visits, that these new armed groups have varying make-ups, ranging from holdout members of groups that have not demobilized to members of the AUC who, after being demobilized, took up arms again. The Colombian Government has in recent weeks recognized the situation and expressed its concern, but at the same time it has warned that if the members of the demobilized groups take up arms again, they will lose their entitlement to the benefits of Law 975 of 2005.

The Mission is also concerned over police reports of the discovery of secret caches of weapons that certain AUC groups failed to hand over when they were demobilized. This situation calls for stepped-up verification and for investigation by the competent authorities. The Mission is in the course of verifying these reports, and is following the matter closely.

Since the latter half of last year, the Mission has conducted post-demobilization visits, mainly in the Departments of Norte de Santander, Nariño, Córdoba, Guajira, and Bolívar. It has also been pursuing a broad agenda based on preliminary information, in follow-up to the concerns expressed in the Secretary General's Sixth Report.

Following is a description of the main findings from verification visits in the five departments mentioned above.



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#### *Norte de Santander*

In the Department of Norte de Santander, the Mission verified the existence of illegal armed groups operating in drug trafficking corridors. These groups are expanding and seizing control of certain territories, and have the potential to become an armed organization of greater dimensions.

The *modus operandi* of these armed groups coincides with that of the old self-defense units, which has led local inhabitants to link them with the demobilized fronts. Some reports suggest that middle-ranking officers who were part of the Catatumbo Bloc are involved, as well as some former members of that organization. The Mission found that these groups were using heavy-handed recruitment methods among demobilized personnel in this area, and these have involved a series of killings and individual displacements.

In geographic terms, these armed groups have been found in the municipalities of Puerto Santander, Cúcuta, Sardinata, Tibú, and El Tarra, and are reported to be expanding towards the municipalities of El Carmen and Convención, as well as Curumani, which is located in the Department of Cesar.

#### *Nariño*

In the Nariño cordillera the Mission monitored an armed group that calls itself "Nueva Generación" ("New Generation"), which is led by a middle-ranking officer from a unit of the dismantled Libertadores del Sur Bloc (BLS) that did not take part in the demobilization process. Its activity focuses on controlling revenues from drug trafficking, and it operates in a strategically important area from which it has access through the mountainous section in the north of the department to the Pacific Ocean, via the Patía River.

It must be noted that the region in which the "Nueva Generación" group was detected coincides with the zone of operations of the demobilized BLS, and it holds sway over the municipalities of Leiva, El Rosario, Policarpa, Cumbitara, and Los Andes. According to some reports, this group is now expanding and has come into conflict with subversive groups operating in the area.

#### *Córdoba*

In follow-up to verification of rearmament in this department, the Mission confirmed the presence of two armed groups. The first is located between the municipalities of Puerto Libertador and Montelíbano. It includes demobilized personnel. In the wake of action by the national army, it has fallen back towards more remote villages beyond Tierradentro.

The second armed group operates in the municipalities of Valencia and Tierralta, especially in the vicinity of the Urrá Dam, which was the turf of the demobilized Córboza Bloc and the Héroes de Tolová Bloc. After the latter group was dismantled, an armed faction that did not take part in the demobilization process was identified, and it controls the local drug traffic.

The Mission is also working with its Montería office on verification activities in the village of Tierradentro in the municipality of Montelíbano (Córdoba), where it has detected the presence of an

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armed group consisting of demobilized paramilitaries. In this case, the Mission has been closely monitoring the beginnings of rearmament and the official response. It is the active role of the community and its leaders that has brought each of these situations to light, in an area that was historically under the control of illegal armed groups, and where the government has begun to establish its presence.

#### *Guajira*

The Mission has received information from various sources about an armed unit operating in the area of Bahía Portete, municipality of Uribe, Alta Guajira. This faction, which consists of no more than 40 men, did not take part in the demobilization, and is being led by one of the commanders of the Wayuú counterinsurgency front, a group belonging to the Northern Bloc paramilitaries.

#### *Bolívar*

The Mission is concerned over the results of the preliminary verification in the village of Pueblito Mejía, municipality of Barranco de Loba (Bolívar), where it has identified the involvement of demobilized personnel in criminal activities, threats, kidnapping, and, generally speaking, in undermining public order. The Mission is following the situation closely, with the cooperation of various state and nongovernmental institutions.

In conclusion we may say that, as confirmed by the verifications conducted in the Departments of Norte de Santander, Nariño, Córdoba, Guajira, and Bolívar, the activity of these groups is linked to drug trafficking, and their modus operandi is highly similar to that of the paramilitary groups that formerly operated in these zones.

Information from the verification visits reveals that demobilized and non-demobilized former commanders of middle rank and former members of the paramilitary groups are involved in illegal activities. To date, there is insufficient evidence to claim that the dismantled groups or their former commanders are heading up the illegal activities detected.

It is important to mention that the Mission will be pursuing its verification work in the remaining regions, where information has been received on possible failures in the dismantling of armed groups.

### V. VERIFICATION OF REINTEGRATION

The Mission has prepared an analysis of the reintegration process, starting with the official offers stipulated in the PRVC "*Modelo de Atención*" (Services Model), which provides a period of two years to apply for benefits. The process was observed at the national level, in the Reference and Opportunity Centers (CRO)<sup>2/</sup>, and in the demobilized units.<sup>3/</sup>

2. The CROs are information and assistance centers for demobilized ex-combatants, set up by the national government. Former members of irregular armed groups are supposed to apply to these centers at the end of the concentration, demobilization, and disarmament phase. There, they can complete the necessary formalities for their full return to civilian life and can receive information on the benefits to which they are entitled.

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The Mission found that, on the basis of the units demobilized up to June 15, 2006, the coverage ratio of the PRVC is 65 percent: of the 30,028 demobilized combatants in question, the program has served 19,752.<sup>47</sup> In other words, 35 percent of former combatants have not accepted the official offer. On the other hand, of the total of former AUC members, 66 percent have been located by the program. The units with the lowest coverage rate are those that were demobilized during 2006, reflecting the fact that they were only recently dismantled and that there is no CRO established to serve this population.

The pace of demobilization has exceeded the response capacity of the PRVC, which was not prepared to cope with such numbers of people. To this must be added other factors, such as the fact that, in some cases, former combatants are unaware of the benefits, requirements, and responsibilities involved; the lack of trust in government agencies; misunderstanding of the interests and capacities of former combatants; the lack of institutional infrastructure; and the tenuous presence of the state in some parts of the country.

With respect to the identification and documentation process, the Mission concludes that 26 percent of former AUC members did not give *versión libre*<sup>48</sup> during the mass demobilization, and that only 36 percent have a *pasado judicial*.<sup>49</sup>

On the health front, places had been arranged in the health system as of April 2006 for 32,777 PRVC beneficiaries. This would be enough to provide coverage for all demobilized AUC members, but is inadequate to serve their immediate family members. Moreover, that figure includes spaces for individual demobilized persons, numbering 10,117. Consequently, it can be said that there is not enough capacity to bring demobilized personnel and their families into the subsidized health system.

Moreover, looking at former combatants who have been in the reintegration process for more than six months, it has been found that only 47 percent have joined the Social Security System, and this figure does not include either the Cacique Nutibara Bloc (BCN) or the Ortega Self-Defense Forces (AO).

In terms of psychosocial care, this continues to be one of the weakest points of the PRVC. According to the PRVC, service was provided in May and June, through psychosocial workshops conducted under contract with local and national operators, for 3,678 persons, equivalent to 12 percent of the demobilized corps, without considering the BCN and the AO. Despite the progress and initiatives of the last few months, much remains to be done to deal with post-traumatic stress and

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3. This analysis is found in the document *Desmovilización y Reincorporación: Panorama General* ("Demobilization and Reincorporation: An Overview"), prepared on the basis of information provided by the Ministry of Interior and Justice, to June 2006.

4. This number does not include persons served by the Peace and Reconciliation Program of the Medellín Municipal Government, who are excluded from this analysis, nor does it include the Ortega Self-Defense Forces and the Héroes de Granada Bloc. The Municipal Government of Medellín is taking care of all demobilized personnel of the Cacique Nutibara Bloc, and around 75 percent of those of the Héroes de Granada Bloc.

5. In this procedure, the demobilized person gives his own "free version" of the events in which he was involved. He may confess, but he is not obliged to do so.

6. The *pasado judicial* is a judicial certificate given only to persons with a clean criminal record.

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individual suffering, prevent the health risks of drug addiction and family violence, and re-socialize former combatants.

Education coverage is also poor. Bearing in mind that 10,039 former combatants have been in the reintegration process for more than six months (without counting the BCN and the AO), only 48 percent have taken the "initial module." According to PRVC records to June 2006, total enrollment in this module is 9,836, i.e., 32 percent of the demobilized corps: in the case of vocational training, the figure is 17.5 percent, and in academic training, 8.2 percent, reflecting low rates of coverage (again, without counting the BCN and the AO).

The dropout rate in formal education is high, much higher than for vocational training, which may be explained by the fact that demobilized persons have an incentive to learn a trade that will provide short-term income. Programs that offer immediate remuneration, such as the "civic auxiliaries" and "manual eradicators," while they constitute alternatives to short-term work, have increased the dropout rate in some regions, because people prefer to earn income rather than complete the education process.

Nevertheless, temporary jobs such as those under the "Civic Auxiliaries" program being implemented with the national police can be a positive experience. The goal is to bring 3,700 demobilized persons into traffic control training programs under the supervision of professional police officers.

The manual eradication of illegal coca crops, which is being verified in Urabá and Córdoba, with the participation of more than 1,500 demobilized AUC members, is a fact to take into consideration. To the extent that these (admittedly incipient) efforts, supervised by government and international institutions, can help to eliminate such crops and restore those lands to legality, this will contribute to building peace.

It was found that only 263 demobilized persons were involved in income-earning projects. According to surveys taken in the Temporary Relocation Zone, demobilized personnel are more attracted to urban trades than to rural activities.

The Peace and Reconciliation Program of Medellín is showing positive results through its "Return to Legality" model. From its evaluation and monitoring of this program, the Mission can say that it constitutes a model to bear in mind. It demonstrates the basic steps that the government can take successfully to provide guidance and support for individuals and groups in the most complex period of reinsertion, which runs from the handover of weapons to the necessary shift from a "violence mindset" to a "legality mindset." Greater stress is now being placed on preparing former combatants before they enter the labor market. It is interesting to note that, recognizing the need to continue this process, the city government has extended the program from 18 to 24 months.

#### VI. MONITORING LAW 975/2005 (THE JUSTICE AND PEACE LAW)

The Mission has been conducting special monitoring and observation of progress in implementing Law 975/2005 (the Justice and Peace Law). This quarter was marked by two important

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events: the Constitutional Court ruled on a challenge to this Law, and the National Reparations and Reconciliation Commission (CNRR) was established.

In its judgment C-370/06, the Court recognized the constitutionality of the alternative penalties, but quashed certain articles in order to bring the proposed law into line with the principles of the Colombian constitution and international treaties.

In its verification work, the Mission is monitoring the establishment and inauguration of the CNRR. The Commission presented a proposed "roadmap" in January 2006, thereby launching a participatory process that has included hearings, forums, and debates, intended to define the model of reparations that will be applied in the country, and the Mission has been following the process. It is very important to note that the Commission is receiving support from the United Nations (OCHA) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), as well as from countries such as the Netherlands, Sweden, Canada, and Spain.

In order to gather information on application of the Justice and Peace Law, the IACHR has conducted three visits to meet with authorities, victims, and civil society organizations, and to observe the judicial proceedings prior to demobilization. On August 1, the IACHR issued a statement on the application and scope of the Justice and Peace Law in Colombia.

## VII. PARTICIPATORY COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

One of the main components of the Mission's work is to support local initiatives in conflict zones, by promoting measures to encourage trust and reconciliation in a culture of democracy, peace, and peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as the identification, formulation, and management of socially oriented initiatives and projects in those areas.

In those places where the Mission has a permanent presence, it has followed a number of participatory initiatives targeted at communities that have been the victims of violence, and at those that are hosting demobilized combatants in their return to civilian life. This involves work on the following topics, among others: Alternative Dispute Settlement Methods, Confidence-Building Measures, Reconciliation and Reconstruction of the Social Fabric; Coexistence, Reacquaintance, and Historical Memory (*Convivencia, Reencuentro y Memoria Histórica*); and Psychosocial Support. The most notable progress has been made in Tierralta (Córdoba), and work is beginning in Medellín (Antioquia).

In Medellín, with the strengthening of the regional office, the Mission is now monitoring the Peace and Reconciliation Program for demobilized ex-combatants. It has also reinforced its presence in the communes.

### The *Conciliemos* Community Justice Program in Tierralta (Córdoba)

In those parts of Colombia that have experienced armed confrontation, communities have suffered from the lack of government services such as the administration of justice, and this has led the local people to resort to "methods" borrowed from the illegal armed groups themselves. The

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Mission is trying to help fill the existing vacuum in this area, until the state and its institutions can extend their presence to those zones.

In implementing the *Conciliemos* Community Justice Project in Tierralta, the Mission has conducted assessments in the communities, put forward the concept of conciliator, and selected 55 community leaders for training as *conciliadores en equidad* (conciliators). The leaders represent approximately 60 communities, with a total population of some 7,000.

#### VIII. SPECIAL MONITORING ACTIVITIES

As part of its verification work, the Mission is following specific cases and situations that involve apparent violations of human rights.

In the Sixth Report, the Mission referred to the disappearance of the youth Jesús Emiro Manzano, during the events in Lamas Verdes and Nuevo Horizonte, in the municipality of Curumaní (Cesar). The Secretary General reports that, thanks to the Mission's monitoring, the young man was found alive.

The Secretary General also reports the murder of the Arhuaco man Miguel Niño, and the forced disappearance of his son, Filadelfo Niño, which occurred in the rural area of the municipality of Pueblo Bello (Cesar) on August 11, 2004. Under its mandate, the Mission will continue to follow this case closely.

Another case that the Mission is monitoring involves the murder of the Kankuamo indigenous leader Freddy Arias on August 4, 2004, in the municipality of Valledupar (Cesar).

The Secretary General also calls attention to complaints by nongovernmental organizations that have approached the Mission to express their concern over threats from groups that, with new names, refer to themselves as *autodefensas* or paramilitaries.

On June 16, 2006, the IACHR issued a press release expressing concern over threats against human rights defenders in Colombia.

#### IX. CONCLUSIONS

The demobilization of more than 30,000 AUC members during the current peace process constitutes a significant step forward in consolidating peace in Colombia. During this stage, while some holdouts still refuse to demobilize, it is of vital importance to continue supporting the reintegration efforts in the country.

The Secretary General notes progress in the process of demobilizing and disarming the AUC, but warns that specific situations arising in some regions will have to be closely monitored.

Timely attention to events following demobilization of the AUC, such as violations of the agreements, the appearance of new illegal groups, and holdouts that refuse to demobilize, should

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allow the Colombian authorities to correct these irregularities in time. In this context, the Secretary General considers that, if the peace process is to be consolidated, the institutions of the Colombian state will have to give priority to the recovery of those territories, villages, and districts where demobilization has occurred.

The Secretary General is also concerned over the discovery of weapons caches following demobilization of some AUC blocs. The Mission will take care to verify these facts and urges the authorities to conduct the necessary investigations.

Similarly, the Secretary General insists on the need to destroy the weapons surrendered during demobilization, in light of the time that has elapsed since they were turned over to the Colombian state.

Generally speaking, the Program for Return to Civilian Life has not succeeded in providing coverage for the majority of those demobilized. The Secretary General reiterates the need to broaden the coverage to all demobilized ex-combatants, and to increase efforts in this direction.

Finally, attending to the communities affected by violence is a central concern of the Secretary General. In this regard, the *Conciliadores en Equidad* Program, which is having an impact in 60 communities in the municipality of Tierralta (Córdoba), represents a model that should be pursued.

In order to contribute further to the consolidation of a lasting and stable peace in the country, the Secretary General considers it essential that the Mission continue its activities under the mandate conferred upon it.



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## ANNEX A

Numbers demobilized, by sex, number of weapons surrendered and men/weapons ratio

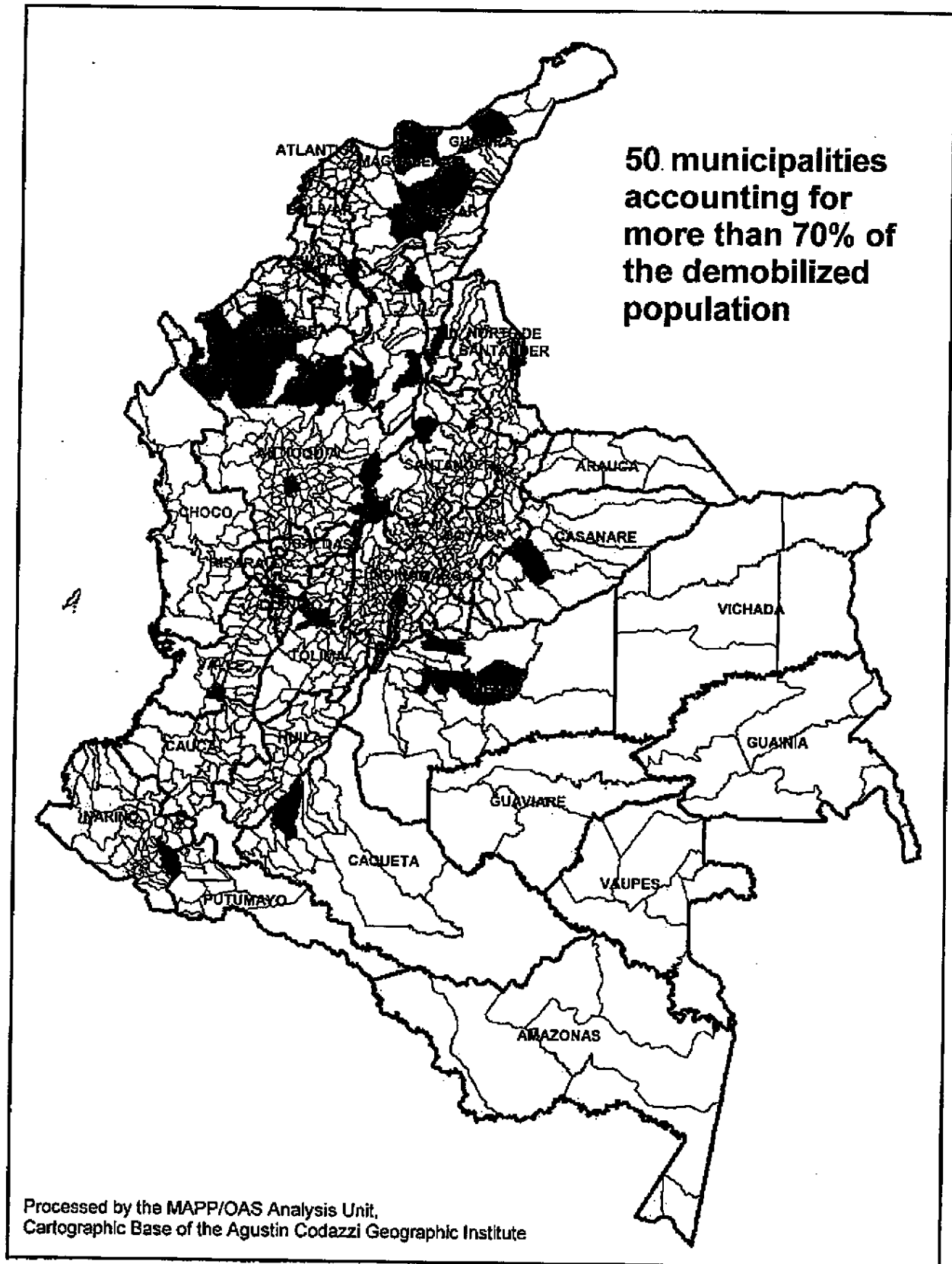
YEAR	UNIT	TOTAL DEMOB.	MEN	WOMEN	WEAPONS	RATIO
2003	CACIQUE NUTIBARA BLOC	868	860	8	497	0.57
	ORTEGA SELF-DEFENSE FORCES	168	168	0	47	0.27
2004	BANANERO BLOC	447	431	16	351	0.78
	SOUTHERN MAGDALENA AND ISLA DE SAN FERNANDO SELF-DEFENSE FORCES	47	47	0	38	0.81
	CUNDINAMARCA SELF-DEFENSE FORCES	148	146	2	156	1.05
	CATATUMBO BLOC	1,425	1,399	26	1,115	0.78
	CALIMA BLOC	557	536	21	451	0.8
	CORDOBA SELF-DEFENSE FORCES	925	897	28	393	0.42
2005	SOUTHWESTERN ANTIOQUEÑO BLOC	125	121	4	103	0.82
	MOJANA FRONT	110	106	4	103	0.93
	HEROES DE TOLOVA FRONT	465	446	19	256	0.55
	MONTES DE MARIA BLOC	594	580	14	364	0.61
	LIBERTADORES DEL SUR BLOC	689	632	57	596	0.86
	HEROES DE GRANADA BLOC	2,033	1,998	3	1,120	0.55
	META AND VICHADA SELF-DEFENSE FORCES	209	197	12	231	1.11
	PACIFICO - HEROES DE CHOCO BLOC	358	314	44	279	0.77
	SECURITY RING <sup>7</sup>					
	CENTAURUS BLOC	1,135	1,090	45	754	0.66
	NORTHWESTERN ANTIOQUEÑO BLOC	222	221	1	153	0.68
	VICHADA DEL BCB FRONT	325	299	26	282	0.86
	TOLIMA BLOC	207	190	17	51	0.24
	NORTHEASTERN ANTIOQUEÑO - BAJO CAUCA AND MAGDALENA MEDIO FRONTS (BCB)	1,922	1,799	123	1,390	0.72
	HEROES Y MARTIRES DEL GUATICA FRONT (BCB)	552	524	28	351	0.63
	VENCEDORES DE ARAUCA BLOC	548	506	42	409	0.74
2006	MINEROS BLOC	2,790	2,576	214	1,432	0.51
	CAMPESINAS DE PUERTO BOYACA SELF-DEFENSE FORCES	742	704	38	316	0.42
	CENTRAL BOLIVAR - SOUTH BOLIVAR BLOC	2,523	2,168	355	1,094	0.43
	RESISTENCIA TAYRONA BLOC	1,166	1,135	31	597	0.51

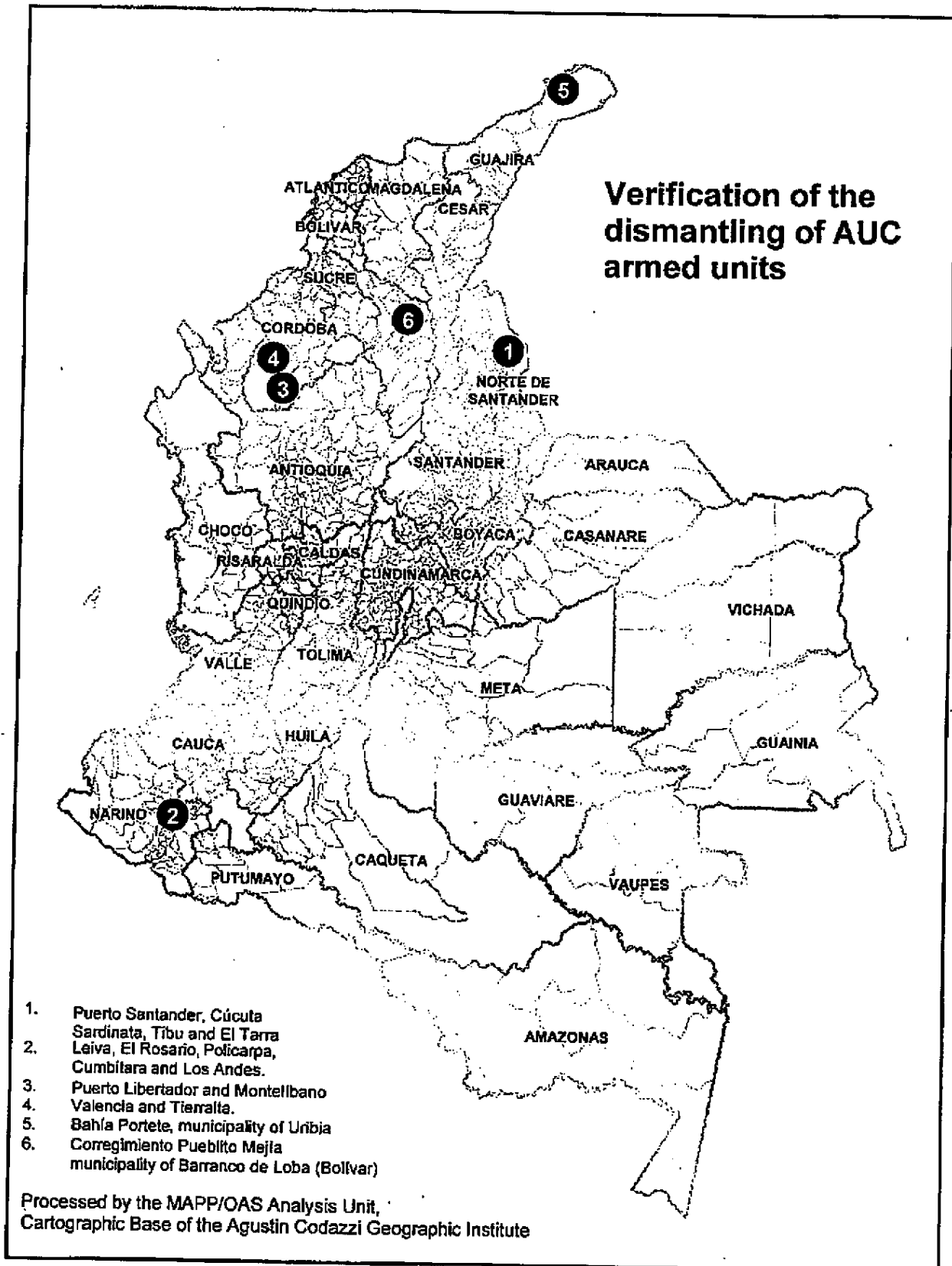
7. The Security Ring (*Anillo de Seguridad*) de Santa Fe de Ralito was formed by men from the Centauros Bloc, the Libertadores del Sur, the Pacifico Bloc, and the Vencedores de Arauca Front. They were demobilized in the Department of Córdoba but their weapons were included in data on their original units.



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CAMPESINAS DEL MAGDALENA MEDIO SELF-DEFENSE FORCES	990	961	29	757	0.76
PROCERES DEL CAGUAN - HEROES DE LOS ANDAQUIES AND HEROES DE FLORENCIA FRONTS (BCB)	552	486	66	341	0.61
SOUTHERN PUTUMAYO FRONT (BCB)	504	487	17	292	0.57
JULIO PEINADO BECERRA FRONT	251	240	11	179	0.71
NORTHERN BLOC (CHIMILA)	2,215	2,043	172	625	0.28
NORTHERN BLOC (LA MESA)	2,545	2,230	315	833	0.32
HEROES DEL GUAVIARE FRONT AND HEROES DE LOS LLANOS FRONT	1,765	1,718	47	1,006	0.56
COSTANERO FRONT - ELMER CARDENAS BLOC	309	297	12	218	0.71
ELMER CARDENAS BLOC - SECOND PHASE	484	484	0	360	0.74
TOTAL	30,915	29,036	1,879	17,540	0.56





# **EXHIBIT D**

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

## **Colombia: Murders Undermine Credibility of Paramilitary Demobilization**

(Washington, DC, February 1, 2007) – The murders of two advocates for victims of paramilitary abuses are a major blow to the credibility of Colombia's paramilitary demobilization process, Human Rights Watch said today.

Yolanda Izquierdo, leader of the People's Housing Organization (Organización Popular de Vivienda) in the department of Cordoba, was assassinated on January 31 after receiving repeated death threats. Izquierdo had represented hundreds of victims at the demobilization hearing of paramilitary chief Salvatore Mancuso. Another victims' representative from Cordoba, Freddy Abel Espitia, was assassinated on January 29. And two weeks ago in the department of Bolivar, the Turbaco office of the League of Displaced Women (Liga de Mujeres Desplazadas) was set afire.

"These murders are clearly intended to intimidate victims and witnesses and prevent them telling the truth about paramilitary abuses," said José Miguel Vivanco, Americas director at Human Rights Watch. "Victims will find it harder than ever to trust the safeguards set up by the government to facilitate their participation in the demobilization process."

Human Rights Watch urged Colombian Attorney General Mario Iguarán, to ensure a prompt and thorough investigation of the killings and to strengthen the protection of victims and witnesses participating in the demobilization process.

Human Rights Watch also called on President Álvaro Uribe to commit himself publicly to end any benefits to paramilitary groups or leaders that are found responsible for these crimes.

"These deaths bring into question the credibility of the whole paramilitary demobilization process," said Vivanco. "It is crucial that those responsible are quickly brought to justice."

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### **Related Material**

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Letter, August 4, 2006

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Press Release, July 19, 2006

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# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Public Statement

AI Index: AMR 23/002/2007 (Public)  
News Service No: 023  
2 February 2007

### **Colombia: Latest killing of human rights defender throws controversial paramilitary demobilization process into further doubt**

Amnesty International condemns the killing of human rights defender Yolanda Izquierdo in the city of Montería, Córdoba Department, on 31 January. Yolanda Izquierdo was reportedly shot several times by gunmen suspected of being linked to army-backed paramilitary groups.

Yolanda Izquierdo had been the victim of several death threats since December 2006 and had days previously reported them to the local authorities and requested protection. These threats are believed to have stemmed from her work representing survivors of paramilitary human rights violations at the demobilization hearing of paramilitary leader Salvatore Mancuso.

The killing was clearly designed to silence those brave enough to speak out against the human rights violations, including war crimes and crimes against humanity, committed by paramilitaries such as Salvatore Mancuso, and by those who have supported the paramilitaries, either politically, economically or militarily, including members of the security forces, as well as powerful economic and political interests.

The killing of Yolanda Izquierdo once again raises serious doubts about a supposed demobilization process that continues to disregard the right of victims to truth, justice and reparation and which has patently failed to effectively dismantle paramilitary groups.

Amnesty International has repeatedly warned that paramilitary groups continue to operate and to violate human rights throughout the country, despite Colombian government assurances that over 30,000 combatants have demobilized.

Amnesty International calls on the relevant national authorities to immediately initiate a thorough and impartial investigation into the killing of Yolanda Izquierdo and to adopt the necessary measures to protect those witnesses wishing to participate in the hearings.

#### **Background Information**

Since 2003, paramilitary groups have been involved in a government-sponsored process to demobilize their combatants. Under the legal framework introduced to facilitate this "demobilization" process – principally the Justice and Peace Law – those members of illegal armed groups who wish to qualify for the procedural benefits contained in the Justice and Peace Law must participate in special hearings in which they must reveal details of any human rights violations they may have committed.

Previous

## Murders over disputed land threaten Colombian peace process

The Associated Press

Published: February 3, 2007

**BOGOTA, Colombia:** The peace deal under which Colombia's brutal right-wing militias disbanded was supposed to work like this: After some 31,000 fighters demobilized, their bosses would confess to their crimes and surrender the vast parcels of land they stole in return for relatively lenient prison sentences.

The fighters have disarmed and the first major confession — by a surprisingly remorseless Salvatore Mancuso — began in December, though remaining sessions have been delayed by an argument over whether they should be nationally televised.

Mancuso and his fellow paramilitary bosses are not, however, giving back the millions of pilfered hectares (acres) of prime real estate they took at gunpoint from Colombian peasants.

And this week the prospect for such reparations — indeed, the viability of the entire peace process — was thrown into doubt with the murder of Yolanda Izquierdo, a plainspoken but determined woman who was a leader in the struggle by thousands to reclaim lost land.

Two gunmen surprised Izquierdo, 43, as she was leaving her home in the northwestern provincial capital of Montería after dark on Wednesday, pumping two bullets into her head and leaving her husband gravely wounded with two gunshot wounds to his chest, police said.

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Izquierdo was buried the next day.

The mother of five was one of some 3 million people forcibly displaced since the 1980s in Colombia's conflict — which though fought by illegal armies of the left and right and fueled by cocaine profits is in essence about the land.

In December, Izquierdo filed a complaint with the Federal Ombudsman's Office in Montería on behalf of 415 families who said they were intimidated in the early 2000s into forfeiting land that had, ironically, been granted them a decade earlier by an early paramilitary chief, Fidel Castano.

On the day she was killed, Izquierdo had visited the office and received instructions on how to formalize the complaints with the federal land

agency, a lawyer in the Ombudsman's Office, Alvaro Sanchez, told The Associated Press.

She had received death threats for trying to reclaim the lands and complained about them to the chief prosecutor's office in mid-January, according to a federal official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to divulge the information.

On Monday, the official said, Izquierdo approached authorities again asking to be given bodyguards. But no bodyguards were assigned.

"They didn't give her the protection she needed," said her sister Targidia Izquierdo, 41.

Targidia Izquierdo said Friday that the family was alone and defenseless and hadn't received a visit from so much as a social worker, despite President Alvaro Uribe's promise almost immediately after the murder to better protect to victims' rights advocates.

Uribe also ordered on Thursday the seizure of assets belonging to demobilized paramilitary leaders to ensure that their massive holdings — by one government estimate encompassing 6.8 million hectares (16.8 million acres), or an area larger than West Virginia — are available as reparations for their thousands of victims.

The private right-wing armies methodically and brutally seized the land over more than a decade under the guise of a counterinsurgency campaign, massacring thousands in the process.

The top paramilitary bosses, jailed and eligible for prison terms of no more than eight years if they confess to crimes including drug trafficking and murder, have hidden the stolen lands behind front men and benefited from widespread chaos in rural land registration.

The situation is especially dire in Córdoba state, a cradle of paramilitary power where Izquierdo's fight to win back a 5-hectare (12-acre) farm included presenting her group's demands before the paramilitary leader Mancuso in December.

Izquierdo's murder "places at risk the guarantee that victims can participate" in the dismantling of paramilitarism, said Carlos Rodríguez, deputy director of the human rights group Colombian Commission of Jurists. "If there is no guarantee, we're not going to make any progress."

The wealthy ranchers who dominate Córdoba — and their political leaders — have made no secret of their affinity for the paramilitaries, first formed in the early 1980s with landowner backing as a buffer against kidnapping and extortion by leftist rebels.

Izquierdo wasn't the only victims' rights leader murdered in Córdoba last week. Freddy Abel Espitia, the 40-year-old president of the Committee of Displaced in the community of Colora, 25 kilometers (15 miles) outside of Montería, was gunned down Sunday night.

As in Izquierdo's killing, no arrests have been made.

Espitia was to have taken part Monday in Montería's first public assembly in which victims of paramilitary abuses offered public testimony.

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## Murders over disputed land threaten Colombian peace process

The Associated Press

Published: February 3, 2007

(Page 2 of 2)

The gathering was organized by the four-month-old Committee of Relatives of Victims of Violence in Cordoba. Its president, Rodrigo Ogaza, said the group has given authorities some 1,600 complaints — 80 percent of which stem from abuses by paramilitaries.

They include the forced sale or theft of some 450 properties amounting to roughly 5,000 hectares (12,386 acres), about 400 murders and 150 forced disappearances, he said.

Ogaza said the fear is palpable in Monteria after the Espitia and Izquierdo killings.

But he won't be intimidated, Ogaza said, even though by his count 12 people who were seeking reparations for paramilitary crimes have been murdered in Cordoba in the past month.

"We're pressing on with our heads high because what we're doing is legal — and ought to be protected by the state."

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## International Justice TRIBUNE

International Justice Tribune - English

February 5, 2007

**SECTION:** Colombia; History

**LENGTH:** 163 words

**HEADLINE:** Attacks against the victims of paramilitaries

**HIGHLIGHT:**

On January 31, Yolanda Izquierdo, head of the People's Housing Organization who represented victims of former paramilitary leader Salvator Mancuso, currently on trial in Medellin [IJT-60], was assassinated in front of her home in Cordoba province, in the northwest part of the country.

**BODY:**

According to the daily El Tiempo, this murder is the third notorious attack in 15 days against a person representing victims of paramilitary forces. Another activist, Freddy Abel Espitia, president of the Cotorra Committee of Displaced Persons (Cordoba), was assassinated and the League of Displaced Women in Bolivar province was set afire. Izquierdo had attended Mancuso's initial appearance hearings in December and had received numerous death threats. Her lawyer was quoted in El Tiempo saying that she had requested court-ordered protection on four occasions in the days preceding her death, but she had been told that she had to wait at least one week. The day after Izquierdo's murder, Colombian president Alvaro Uribe ordered that the assets of all former paramilitary leaders be seized. Under the Justice and Peace Law, these assets are to be used to compensate their victims. A 23,000 dollar reward was also promised for any information on the perpetrators of the murder.

**LOAD-DATE:** February 5, 2007



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**COLOMBIA:****The Limits of Paramilitary Repentance**

Constanza Vieira

**CARTAGENA, Colombia, Feb 9 (IPS)** - Former paramilitary fighter Wilson Salazar, alias "El Loro", was impatient over and annoyed by the prosecutor's questions and the charges put forth by the victims' defence attorneys. He claimed he was being blamed for more crimes than he had committed.

He also said he regretted having submitted himself to the Justice and Peace Law, which stipulates that he must make a full confession to obtain legal benefits, such as a sentence of just eight years for the human rights crimes he committed. The law, which went into effect in 2006, governs the far-right paramilitary umbrella group's negotiated demobilisation.

Among the crimes he committed, "El Loro" shot a 13-year-old girl and beat her to death with a shovel as she tried to defend her mother, Cecilia Lazo.

Lazo, a candidate for mayor in the town of San Alberto in the northeastern province of Cesar, was shot and killed by "El Loro".

None of the survivors of paramilitary atrocities or the families of victims attended his confession this week in Barranquilla, Colombia's main Caribbean coastal city.

On Thursday, the government adopted regulations for the participation by victims of human rights abuses in the legal proceedings that began in December against paramilitaries like "El Loro" (The Parrot) for crimes against humanity, which are not subject to any statute of limitations and cannot be amnestied.

The decree issued by the Ministry of the Interior and Justice states that in order to attend the trials, the victims must prove that they have suffered "direct damages," must have already filed a formal complaint against the accused, and must register in a special database.

And to participate in the legal investigations, they must renounce, in writing, their right to keep their identity in reserve. However, the decree says nothing about providing security for the victims.

Despite the fact that the paramilitary United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC) was officially dismantled in 2006 after closed-door negotiations with the government of right-wing President Álvaro Uribe, the killings have continued.

On Jan. 20, the headquarters of the League of Displaced Women near the Caribbean resort city of Cartagena, where the group had built their new settlement "City of Women", was set on fire.

Freddy Espitia, head of a local committee of displaced persons in the Caribbean province of Córdoba, in northwestern Colombia, was shot and killed on Jan. 28.

On Jan. 31, in Montería, the capital of Córdoba, gunmen on a motorcycle killed Yolanda Izquierdo, a 43-year-old community leader who had gathered evidence to help 863 rural families regain their land, which had been seized by the paramilitaries. She was presenting the evidence under the reparations system set up by the Justice and Peace Law.

The murder of Óscar Cuadrado, the leader of a regional association of displaced persons, was reported on Feb. 1 in Maicao, in the northeastern province of La Guajira.

And on Feb. 7, Carmen Santana was shot to death in Apartadó, a banana-producing region in the northeastern province of Antioquia. After great hesitation, Santana had decided to pursue the truth about the 1995 murder of her first husband, a banana worker.

Santana had rebuilt her life with her second husband, Hernán Correa, vice-president of the Central Unitaria de Trabajadores central trade union.

Izquierdo, two days before she was killed, had pleaded with the authorities, for the fourth time in five days — this time in tears — for protection. But they told her that the paperwork would take a week.

Loyar Pineda, one of Izquierdo's schoolmates from Las Claras, the Córdoba town where both were born, told IPS that "There is always someone who has to speak out. You see the injustice and you just can't stop and you can't keep silent in the face of all of

these things that will hurt the interests of the most dispossessed and vulnerable."

Pineda, who has lost a brother in Colombia's civil war, is himself an activist.

The new regulations for participating in the trials for paramilitaries "have restricted access by the victims," a member of the Colombian Commission of Jurists (CCJ) remarked to IPS.

The CCJ, an internationally renowned human rights group, is defending dozens of victims of paramilitary abuses.

"The reality is that in nearly 80 percent of the cases of human rights violations, formal complaints have not been filed," explained the CCJ activist, who asked not to be identified, for safety reasons. Merely reporting human rights abuses in Colombia can be a deadly undertaking.

In the legal proceedings against the paramilitaries, victims who have been certified as having suffered direct damages can turn in evidence, suggest questions to the prosecutor taking the confessions, and report assets that were seized by paramilitary groups and that could be returned to victims of abuses, such as the land that Izquierdo was trying to regain for the displaced families, whose struggle she was leading.

They cannot be present in the courtroom where the confession is being given, but must sit in a different room, where they can watch the trial proceedings via closed-circuit television.

"These are crimes against humanity in which the victim is humanity. Anyone should have the right to listen to the confessions and to be there, and shouldn't have to demonstrate that they were direct victims," said the CCJ source.

>From the start, in December, the proceedings against former members of the AUC were closed to the press. But heavy pressure from victims' associations, human rights groups and journalists reversed that rule in practice, although not officially.

It is up to the Prosecutor General's Office to decide whether or not to request permission to broadcast one or more of the hearings on television, either live or deferred.

The National Television Commission (CNTV), presided over by Ricardo Galán -- President Uribe's press chief until December -- would then decide on whether to assign airspace for broadcasting the hearings.

Confession of crimes is the first stage in the trials against some of the former members of AUC, which grouped most of the death squads that emerged in the early 1980s, organised by landowners and members of the army.

AUC, which is heavily involved in the drug trade, according to its own leaders, is blamed by United Nations human rights officials and leading global rights watchdogs for 80 percent of the atrocities committed in Colombia's four-decade civil war. The paramilitaries work in close cooperation with the military, as documented by U.N. officials, the U.S. State Department, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

The 2,695 paramilitaries charged with crimes against humanity can voluntarily take recourse to the benefits offered by the Justice and Peace Law. The rest of the nearly 31,000 people who showed up to demobilise, according to official figures, were pardoned.

The paramilitary demobilisation process has been widely criticised as a *de facto* amnesty.

If it is demonstrated in the trials that the accused have not confessed to all of their crimes, they will be remitted to the ordinary courts, where they will face sentences of up to 40 years.

How is it determined that a confession is not complete? The Prosecutor General's Office says its special prosecutors have "swept" the country to gather testimony on paramilitary abuses. But in the view of the CCJ, "not even 100,000 men could cover the entire territory and have time to register all of the human rights violations that have been committed and continue to be committed."

Even after the AUC declared a unilateral ceasefire in December 2002 to pave the way for the disarmament negotiations, the paramilitaries have been responsible for 60 percent of the killings and forced disappearances that have been committed, according to the CCJ.

In January, the former AUC chiefs said they were opposed to broadcasting the hearings live on television, arguing that some "touchy" aspects needed to be kept in reserve because they could endanger their lives by affecting due process and creating a climate of "mistrust."

Izquierdo's murder was mentioned by former AUC chief Salvatore Mancuso as one of the "sinister developments" that have occurred and will continue to occur. Nearly 5,000 combatants have taken up their weapons again, he said.

He claimed that behind the rearming of the paramilitaries are several former commanders who took part in the negotiations, but who did not submit themselves to the Justice and Peace Law, as he himself had done.

Mancuso, who is also accused of involvement in drug trafficking, said that his former fellow paramilitary chiefs believe the government has failed to live up to the agreements reached with the AUC. (END/2007)

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Los Angeles Times

February 8, 2007 Thursday  
Home Edition

**SECTION:** MAIN NEWS; Foreign Desk; Part A; Pg. 3

**LENGTH:** 1056 words

**HEADLINE:** The World;  
Killing haunts Colombia's peace plan;  
A slain activist was trying to regain families' land seized a decade ago by right-wing paramilitary groups.

**BYLINE:** Chris Kraul, Times Staff Writer

**DATeline:** MONTERIA, COLOMBIA

**BODY:**

Yolanda Izquierdo received death threats, but her pleas for police protection went unanswered.

When she was killed last week, it delivered a devastating blow to Colombia's tortured peace process.

Izquierdo, 44, was gunned down in daylight on the patio of her concrete-block house in the Mi Ranchito barrio in this torrid cattle-country town 300 miles northwest of the capital, Bogota. She was leading a group of 800 displaced families trying to regain possession of land seized a decade ago by right-wing paramilitary groups.

No arrests have been made in her slaying, but human rights advocates think she was targeted by militia leaders to send a message to displaced Colombians to give up their fight for reparations.

"Fighting the paramilitaries is like a burro going up against a tiger," said Miguel Arroyo, a displaced farmer, after hearing of Izquierdo's slaying.

"Other members of her group told her that there had been phone calls, so she went to Bogota and asked the prosecutor's office for protection," said her daughter Dina, 15, interviewed Monday at the family home, where an altar had been set up in Izquierdo's memory. "When the police didn't respond, she told me she had a feeling she wouldn't live much longer."

A mother of five, Izquierdo thought she was playing by the rules of the peace plan advocated by President Alvaro Uribe and supported by the United States.

Uribe sees the plan as a blueprint for ending decades of civil war and bringing justice and reparations to war-crime victims and millions of displaced Colombians.

Under the plan, about 31,000 right-wing paramilitary soldiers have given up their weapons. Dozens of their leaders have surrendered in exchange for the promise of light sentences, as long as they confess to their crimes and give back

The World; Killing haunts Colombia's peace plan; A slain activist was trying to regain families' land seized a decade ago by right-wing paramilitary groups. Los Angeles Times February 8, 200

what they plundered, including millions of acres of land taken from peasants such as Izquierdo and her followers.

The right-wing militias started ostensibly as defensive forces against revolutionary groups, but evolved into shock troops that engaged in massive land grabs, drug trafficking and mafia-style takeovers of government contracts and businesses.

They are thought to be responsible for most of the slayings in the nation's long-running civil war.

Government investigators have fanned out across Colombia to gather evidence, opening 20 offices to handle claims from the displaced and other victims. The government has started broadcasting televised encouragements for victims to come forward.

Izquierdo and her group faced considerable risk by making their claims.

Since October, she had spoken several times to prosecutors, laying out a case that her group was the legal owner of 107 Las Tangas, a sprawling hacienda now in the hands of the Castano family, which oversaw paramilitaries.

She testified at a hearing last month in Medellin, where militia leader Salvatore Mancuso calmly confessed to hundreds of crimes, including kidnappings and massacres.

"She was a natural leader, a good woman," said Colombian lawmaker Bernardo Miguel Elias Vidal, who employed Izquierdo as a campaign organizer.

She caught his attention several years ago after leading displaced farmers in a takeover of government land near Monteria.

Izquierdo's killing is widely thought to have been ordered by paramilitary groups that have no intention of giving up their land, and that see her efforts as a threat.

"She was very brave but very vocal and possibly imprudent," said Rodrigo Ogaza, who was forced from his 12-acre farm near Turbo in 1981.

Ogaza is a member of another displaced victims group based in Monteria. He said his group kept a "lower profile" than Izquierdo's.

"We do not make public accusations against specific paramilitary groups or try to recover specific parcels of land, because to do so would be suicidal," Ogaza said. "What we demand is an integral solution for Colombia's displaced. It's the government's responsibility to do it."

The killing followed the slayings of two land activists in northern Colombia in January. Gustavo Espitia of Lorica and Oscar Sanchez of Guajira both had gained public attention as victims advocates.

Also in January, a fire thought to have been the work of an arsonist destroyed the City of Women community center, a U.S.-supported housing development for displaced women in the Caribbean port city of Cartagena.

The center's director, Patricia Guerrero, said the blaze was a message to those who lived there to "keep quiet" and stop seeking reparations.

The fire brought a rebuke from U.S. Sen. Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vt.), whose staff helped fund the project. In an e-mail, Leahy described the fire as a "despicable crime against some of Colombia's poorest displaced families."

Reparations were set in motion by the Justice and Peace Law passed by Colombia's Congress in 2005.

The World; Killing haunts Colombia's peace plan; A slain activist was trying to regain families' land seized a decade ago by right-wing paramilitary groups. Los Angeles Times February 8, 2007

In addition to setting conditions for the surrender of paramilitary leaders, it established a reparation fund to be financed principally by assets reclaimed from paramilitary groups.

About 29,000 people have filed reparation claims. Activists say the figure is low because most Colombians fear that filing a claim means certain death.

Paramilitary leaders have not surrendered assets. The farm sought by Izquierdo's group is occupied by Sol Castano, the sister of notorious paramilitary leaders Fidel, Carlos and Vicente Castano, displaced victims groups say.

Izquierdo's slaying and the government's apparent failure to provide her with protection drew an apology from Interior Minister Carlos Holguin and caused some to question the peace process.

Gustavo Gallon, director of the Colombian Commission of Jurists, a human rights advocacy group, said the killing of activists such as Izquierdo and the inability of the government to protect witnesses confirmed the fears of some that "this isn't a peace process but a reengineering of paramilitarism."

Lisa Haugaard of the Latin America Working Group, a human rights organization in Washington, said Izquierdo's killing was a "death foretold."

"Why couldn't the government protect one of the top witnesses against the most feared paramilitary leader just after she testified?" Haugaard asked.

"If the government wants the tiniest drop of legitimacy for this demobilization process, it needs to protect witnesses now."

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chris.kraul@latimes.com

Kraul, The Times' Bogota Bureau chief, was recently on assignment in Monteria.

**GRAPHIC: PHOTO: GUNNED DOWN:** "She was a natural leader, a good woman," a Colombian lawmaker said of Izquierdo. The mother of five led a group of 800 displaced families. **PHOTOGRAPHER:** El Meridiano **PHOTO: 'DEATH FORETOLD':** Yolanda Izquierdo was slain outside her home in Monteria. Her death is widely thought to have been ordered by paramilitary groups that have no intention of giving up seized land. In seeking reparations, Izquierdo followed the peace process advocated by President Alvaro Uribe and supported by the United States. **PHOTOGRAPHER:** Meridiano De Cordoba European Pressphoto Agency

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NUPGE  
15 Auriga Drive  
Nepean, Ontario  
CANADA, K2E 1B7  
(613) 228-9200  
(613) 228-9201 (Fax)

E-mail Us:  
national@nupge.ca

## Colombian woman trade union leader murdered

"Yet another three children have been orphaned, thereby joining the long list of sons and daughters of workers."

Bogota (16 Feb. 2007) - Trade unions around the world are expressing outrage at the recent assassination of Carmen Cecilia Santana Romaña, an officer of the Colombian rural workers' union SINTRAINAGRO.

This brings the number of members and officers of SINTRAINAGRO who have been assassinated since the union was founded to 435.

Carmen Cecilia Santana Romaña, 28 years old, was a leader in the agriculture union SINTRAINAGRO and a workers' organizer at Finca Palmeras, where she served on the union's negotiating committee. The cold-blooded murder occurred in the home she shared with her three children and Hernán Correa Miranda, the first vice president of Colombia's national trade union central - the Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT).



### Campaign of threats and intimidation

The murder followed an e-mail campaign of threats against the family members of trade union, civic and human rights activists in opposition to the government.

The assassination has been condemned by SINTRAINAGRO, a number of Global Trade Union Federations and by the CUT.

The CUT is demanding that the national government conduct a full, speedy, and impartial investigation. CUT also reiterates its demand that the political establishment undertake immediate measures to eradicate all forms of violence against trade unionists.

In 2006 there were a total of 96 murders in Colombia that were a result of trade union activism.

### Global outrage at assassination

Expressions of shock and grief of this most recent killing in Colombia have come in an outpouring of letters from Latin American and trade unions worldwide.

Patricia Buitica, a member of the National Reconciliation Commission which is overseeing the implementation of the paramilitary demobilization, released a letter following Carmen Cecilia Santana's murder. In the letter she says:

This past November, Carmen Cecilia visited my office in Bogotá, seeking legal advice to denounce the murder of the father of her children and the intimidation and fear that had forced her to leave the region, finding herself displaced in the city of Villavicencio.

During our chat, she felt secure, having not previously found the opportunity to denounce or talk about the events with anyone other than her own family. In my position as Commissioner of the National Reparation and Reconciliation Commission (Spanish acronym CNRR), I gave her a sense of confidence.

I explained to her the legal tools and mechanisms that, as an indirect victim, she could use: the protection available for her and her immediate family, humanitarian aid that could minimize economic distress, and perhaps most important of all, her obligation to speak out, so that those responsible pay for the damage they caused.

She asked me for time to think about it, and I obliged. Toward the end of December she told me that, thinking about her children, she had decided to speak out and had returned to the region.

The fear had not let go of her, but she was conscious of what she ought to do. Although she did not want to approach the region's authorities with the issue, I suggested she do it through the Colombian Women for Peace Initiative, the organization which I direct and which is dedicated basically to attending to and advising victims. Sadly, Carmen Cecilia was not able to speak out.

Writing to Colombian President Álvaro Uribe, International Trade Union Confederation General Secretary Guy Ryder expressed global labour's contempt, by stating his disappointment that "yet another three children have been orphaned, thereby joining the long list of sons and daughters of workers." NUPGE

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• [Colombia: the struggle for justice and peace](#)

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HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

## A Pact with the Devil

By Carol Pier, published in Baltimore Sun

Carmen Cecilia Santana Romaña, a 28-year-old mother of three and a national trade union officer, was shot dead in her home in Antioquia, Colombia, on Feb. 7. Her murder came as little surprise; the most dangerous country in the world for trade unionists is Colombia, which will become Washington's newest free trade partner unless Congress stops the deal.

Some Democrats may be eager to show that they are not obstructionists on trade by cutting a deal with the Bush administration to "fix" the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement and passing the revised accord. But that's the wrong approach with Colombia. Congress should reject the pact outright.

In Colombia, trade unionists who are not murdered are often threatened, attacked or kidnapped. The overwhelming majority of cases are unsolved; many are never investigated, and the perpetrators go unpunished, ready to strike again. The government says 58 unionists were murdered in Colombia in 2006, up from 40 the year before. Labor groups report even higher totals: 77 murdered in 2006, up from 70 in 2005.

Colombia is a violent country, but its trade unionists are not random casualties. They are especially targeted when exercising their rights to organize and bargain collectively, moments of great potential for change.

Change threatens Colombia's two main guerrilla groups and its Mafia-like paramilitaries, often linked to the anti-union violence. Change also threatens the government, which has proved more likely to be infiltrated by paramilitaries than to pursue them and more likely to grant them concessions than to impose punishment.

Despite \$4 billion in U.S. support through Plan Colombia, the Colombian government has yet to take a tough stand against paramilitaries. Since paramilitary demobilization began four years ago, Colombia has doled out the benefits of the process while imposing few of the burdens. Demobilized paramilitary leaders were supposed to stop illegal activity, but paramilitaries are still involved in violence and drug trafficking. And leaders can continue masterminding crimes from prison on unrestricted cell phones.

Paramilitary influence may well reach into the country's highest circles of power. On Feb. 22, the Colombian intelligence agency's head from 2002 to 2005 was arrested on charges of conspiring with paramilitaries, including in the killing of union leaders and academics. The Colombian Supreme Court has ordered the arrest of nine congressmen from President Alvaro Uribe's coalition for their links with paramilitaries. More than a dozen other politicians are also under investigation. Mr. Uribe is spinning these developments as evidence of his willingness to clean house, yet they resulted from independent investigations by judicial institutions and the media.

The U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement, signed in November 2006 and awaiting congressional consideration, would reward Colombia with prized access to American markets even as its workers' rights are brutally violated.

The vital labor rights fixes that congressional Democrats proposed last week for all pending and future free trade accords would not come close to addressing Colombia's problems.

Its human rights problems go far beyond its weak labor laws and their poor enforcement. They cannot be solved through corrections to the trade agreement. Human Rights Watch, which normally takes no position on free trade per se, opposes any free trade accord with Colombia because of its egregious record on human rights.

Before Colombia enjoys a free trade agreement with the United States, it must take a hard line on paramilitarism by initiating serious investigations and prosecutions of cases of violence and threats against trade unionists and by protecting potential witnesses.

The U.S. government should fund the human rights unit of the Colombian attorney general's office to help meet these goals, conditioned upon continued "measurable progress" toward their fulfillment. But it should not reward the country with a free trade agreement.

If the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement enters into force, U.S. producers will compete directly against Colombian producers whose workers often cannot exercise basic rights without risking their lives. The United States will also have demonstrated a double standard in its "war on terror," rewarding with much-coveted trade benefits a country that stands by while its narco-terrorist paramilitaries crush fundamental human rights.

*Carol Pier is a senior researcher on labor rights and trade at Human Rights Watch.*

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